

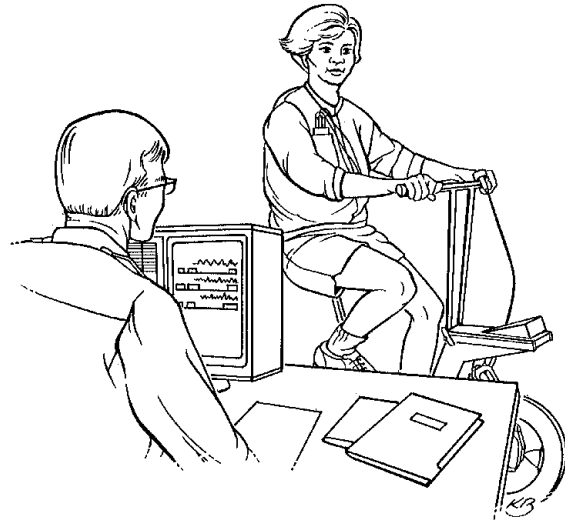
# What Is Cardiac Rehabilitation?

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**A** cardiac rehabilitation program takes place in a hospital or in the community. “Rehab” is for patients who are getting better after heart problems or surgery.

One of the best things you can do for yourself is to get in a rehab program. Everything you need to get and stay healthy is in one place, and medical staff is on hand at all times.

Rehabilitation can do a lot to speed your recovery and reduce your chances of future heart problems.



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## What happens in a rehabilitation program?

- Rehabilitation programs can help you change your lifestyle habits. These programs often take place at a hospital with a rehabilitation team or with the help of your doctor, nurse or other health care professionals.
- Many people find that rehab programs are very helpful after getting out of a hospital. They allow people to join a group to exercise and to get special help in making lifestyle changes.
- Start slowly, following a safe exercise program that gradually helps you to become stronger.
- Gradually move into a more intensive program that lets you work longer and harder.
- Possibly begin strength training if your doctor says you can.
- Have your heart rate, blood pressure and EKG monitored.

During your rehabilitation program you'll...

- Exercise using a treadmill, bike, rowing machine or walk/jog track.
- Be monitored by a nurse or another health care professional for a change in symptoms.

After you've completed the program, you may feel better than ever. Make these lifestyle changes a part of your everyday life!

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## How else does it help me?

- You may go to classes or get personal help to quit smoking and stay smoke-free.
- A nutritionist will help you create a healthy eating plan to reduce your intake of foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- You'll improve your cardiovascular fitness.
- You'll be weighed and taught ways to lose weight if you need to.
- You can learn relaxation skills to help manage and reduce your stress.
- You may meet others who've just been through a similar event.

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## How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or health care professional. Or call your American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721.
- If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.

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## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

*How often should I go to rehab?*

*Is it covered by my health insurance?*




South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control

ML-002129 11/04

*Your contributions to the American Heart Association or the American Stroke Association will support research that helps make publications like this possible.*

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